

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

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TO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, SOPN, CG, US

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE ON ZAIRE TRIAL

1. FOLLOWING IS DEPT'S CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED
ON ZAIRIAN DEATH SENTENCES:

Q: THERE ARE NEWS REPORTS THAT A ZAIRIAN MILITARY PROSECU-
TOR HAS DEMANDED THE DEATH SENTENCE FOR 28 OUT OF 91
SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS ACCUSED OF COMPLICITY IN A PLOT TO
OVERTHROW PRESIDENT MOBUTU. CAN YOU CONFIRM THESE REPORTS
AND DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THEM?

A: NO, WE HAVE SEEN THESE NEWS REPORTS BUT WE HAVE NOTHING
OFFICIAL ON THE PROSECUTOR'S STATEMENTS. WE HAVE NO COM-
MENT.

Q: THE REPORTS CITE THE PROSECUTION'S REFERENCE TO AN
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UNIDENTIFIED U.S. DIPLOMAT HAVING ATTENDED A MEETING BE-
TWEEN THE ALLEGED PLOTTERS AND ZAIRIAN OPPOSITIONIST LEAD-
ERS AT LIEGE, BELGIUM IN OCTOBER 1977. IS THERE ANY TRUTH
TO THESE CHARGES?

A: I WOULD LIKE TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT NEITHER THE
U.S. GOVERNMENT NOR ANY U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS BEEN

INVOLVED IN ANY WAY IN ANY PLOT OR OTHER ACTIVITY DIRECTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE OR OFFICIALS OF THAT GOVERNMENT. NO AMERICAN DIPLOMAT HAS PARTICIPATED AT ANY TIME IN ANY MEETING SUCH AS WAS DESCRIBED IN THE COURT TESTIMONY.

Q: HAS THE U.S. GOVERNMENT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ALLEGATIONS?

A: YES, WE HAVE CONVEYED OUR ASSURANCES OF NON-INVOLVEMENT TO HIGH LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY, AND IN RESPONSE THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE HAS TOLD US WE ARE NOT SUSPECT.

Q: BUT I RECALL THAT SIMILAR ACCUSATIONS WERE MADE AGAINST THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IN 1975 AND THAT EVENTUALLY THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE ASKED THAT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO ZAIRE BE RECALLED. WAS THERE NO BASIS TO THOSE ALLEGATIONS EITHER?

A: THE ALLEGATIONS MADE WERE UNTRUE THEN AS THEY ARE NOW. AND WE INFORMED THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE AT THAT TIME, AS IN THIS INSTANCE, THAT THERE IS NO BASIS IN FACT TO SUCH ALLEGATIONS.

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2. NO QUESTIONS ON SUBJECT AROSE AT MARCH 14 NOON BRIEFING.

3. FOLLOWING IS ACCOUNT OF MARCH 10 PRESS BRIEFING AT WHICH QUESTIONS DID ARISE: QUOTE

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY REACTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN ZAIRE THAT NEARLY 100 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED FOR PLOTTING AGAINST MOBUTU?

A. IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THOSE PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED AND TRIED ACCORDING TO ZAIRIAN LAW AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT THE DECISIONS THAT THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT HAS MADE TO US.

Q. YOU ARE NOT MAKING REPRESENTATIONS THEN TO THE ZAIRIAN GOVERNMENT?

A. ON ANOTHER MATTER WE HAVE.

THERE WAS APPARENTLY AN ALLEGATION OR A REFERENCE IN TESTIMONY THAT AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT HAD HAD SOME IN-

VOLVEMENT WITH THIS ALLEGED PLOT AND I WOULD LIKE TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT NEITHER THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT NOR ANY U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY WAY IN ANY PLOT OR OTHER ACTIVITY DIRECTED AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE OR OFFICIALS OF THAT GOVERNMENT. NO AMERICAN DIPLOMAT HAS PARTICIPATED AT ANY TIME IN ANY MEETING SUCH AS WAS DESCRIBED IN THE COURT TESTIMONY.

NOW, WITH THAT BACKGROUND, IN ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION OF HAVE WE MADE ANY REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE, YES, WE HAVE CONVEYED OUR ASSURANCES OF NON-INVOLVEMENT TO HIGH LEVELS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RECENTLY.

Q. AFTER IT APPEARED IN THE COURT TESTIMONY?

A. I WOULD ASSUME SO, YES.

Q. IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THE REPORTS FROM THE GROUP OF ZAIRIANS LIVING IN BELGIUM THAT MOBUTU IS SENDING HIS TROOPS OUT AND ATTACKING TOWNSPEOPLE SORT OF TO ENFORCE WHAT THEY SAY IS HIS DICTATORSHIP IN ZAIRE?

A. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY REPORTS ALONG THOSE LINES.

Q. THEY WERE IN THE FBIS REPORTS.

A. I AM SORRY. I JUST HAVEN'T SEEN IT.

Q. WHO IS THIS DIPLOMAT?

A. I DON'T HAVE THE NAME FOR YOU.

Q. IS HE A SENIOR RANKING DIPLOMAT?

A. I REALLY DON'T KNOW. I HAVE NO IDEA.

THANK YOU. UNQUOTE VANCE

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